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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

FOR THE YEAR 1953.

Boston, February 15, 1954.

Hon. John B. Hynes,
Mayor of the City of Boston.

Sir:

In accordance with the provisions of section 115, chapter 479 of the Acts of 1938, as amended, I submit herewith a brief report of the activities of the Building Department during the year 1953.

Harry J. Keefe,
Building Commissioner.

Statement of Building Operations in the City of Boston for the Year Ending December 31, 1953.

	1953.		1952.		1951.		1950.		1949.	
	Number.	Cost.	Number.	Cost.	Number.	Cost.	Number.	Cost.	Number.	Cost.
Type I	29	$9,800,500	71	$27,428,975	139	$32,655,390	60	$19,825,125	82	$20,816,810
Type II	3	192,000	52	9,466,300	6	2,014,500	8	728,400	10	632,200
Type III	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	200,000
Type IV	118	3,631,250	116	3,488,045	140	3,494,705	156	3,713,125	132	2,602,965
Type V	49	153,745	51	140,500	48	181,700	60	237,545	68	268,470
Type VI	429	3,469,880	461	3,633,915	508	9,688,061	376	7,877,785	391	3,810,249
Total new construction	628	$17,247,375	751	$44,157,735	841	$48,034,356	660	$32,381,980	684	$28,330,694
Alterations, repairs, etc.	5,271	10,526,674	5,772	9,755,517	5,989	12,050,410	5,908	12,524,942	6,241	10,534,807
Total structural construction	5,899	$27,774,049	6,523	$53,913,252	6,830	$60,084,766	6,568	$44,906,922	6,925	$38,865,501
Plumbing	2,811	$3,317,941	2,889	$3,277,622	2,709	$4,142,115	3,032	$3,932,903	3,030	$3,228,693
Gas fitting	6,137	791,894	5,690	810,167	4,920	688,485	5,863	728,400	5,934	1,271,905
Heaters, ovens, engines, etc.	417	589,075	238	246,629	385	642,848	327	497,001	335	884,199
Elevators, new freight	41	233,168	44	290,155	28	225,663	69	219,412	50	231,758
Elevators, new passenger	97	1,568,860	33	541,765	45	876,135	66	1,677,656	54	863,395
Elevators, alterations, freight	108	83,599	125	42,411	163	80,887	169	59,677	179	66,497
Elevators, alterations, passenger	183	177,016	254	222,507	305	368,440	310	130,241	298	118,965
Signs, projections, etc.	447	219,749	636	218,404	497	195,420	489	243,639	385	193,038
Fire escapes, etc.	819	191,716	520	109,211	569	132,558	391	105,515	669	148,117
Take-downs, wood	162	75,636	96	55,718	220	75,526	199	94,154	143	50,948
Take-downs, brick, etc.	101	154,406	341	646,897	176	194,620	120	122,629	58	63,007
Sprinklers	178	567,157	172	520,914	105	450,053	115	344,879	115	376,832
Excavations	47	27,440	39	57,500	26	25,840	43	148,310	23	18,000
Use of premises	58	—	33	—	61	—	48	—	47	—
Totals	11,616	$7,997,657	11,110	$7,039,900	10,209	$8,098,620	11,241	$8,973,954	11,320	$7,515,354
Grand total all work	17,515	$35,771,706	17,633	$60,953,152	17,039	$68,183,386	17,809	$53,880,876	18,245	$46,380,855
Department revenue	.....	$94,077.25	.....	$86,957.25	.....	$72,236.00	.....	$89,345.00	.....	$73,528.50

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Number of Documents and Fees Received by the Building Department — January 1 to December 31, 1953.

	Number	Fees Paid
New construction	650	$33,337 00
Alterations	7,401	27,430 00
Elevator, annual tests—minor alterations	1,882	6,464 00
Amendments	209	742 00
Sprinklers	177	942 00
Night elevator tests	45	528 00
Special foundation	44	220 00
Board of Appeal	221	2,990 00
Boilers, etc.	419	286 00
Plumbing, old	2,268	3,525 00
Plumbing, new	476	3,160 50
Plumbing, no fee	66	—
Gas fitting, old	6,039	6,348 75
Gas fitting, new	70	118 00
Gas fitting, no fee	84	—
Building law books	507	1,267 50
Petit law books	—	204 00
Elevator licenses, new	1,686	1,686 00
Elevator licenses, renewal	4,477	2,238 50
Elevator licenses, out of town	6	3 00
Elevator licenses, new, no fee	18	—
Elevator licenses, renewal, no fee	172	—
Elevator licenses, duplicates	56	28 00
Master gas fitter licenses, new	20	40 00
Master gas fitter licenses, renewal	652	1,304 00
Journeyman gas fitter licenses, new	37	18 50
Journeyman gas fitter licenses, renewal	841	504 20
Permission to inspect plans in vault	211	538 00
Certified copies of documents	71	238 00
	28,855	$94,077 25

Summary of Examinations and Reports, 1953

New buildings	6,578
Alterations	20,599
Existing buildings	169
Boilers, engines, etc.	15
Plumbing, new	1,530
Plumbing, alterations	8,079
Plumbing tests	652
Gas fitting, new	696
Gas fitting, alterations	11,218
Gas fitting, tests	4,558
Egress	43,689

Elevators	8,080
Sprinklers	4,061
Standpipes	165
Tests of both	2,201
Zoning	2,865
Plans	1,918
Special form applications	5,695
Fires	734
Gas accidents:	
Fatal	19
Nonfatal	59
Elevator accidents:	
Fatal	3
Nonfatal	20
Building accidents — special reports	5
Complaints made — Violations	798
Complaints made — Unsafe Buildings	114
Finals	2,129
Communications acted on	1,703
Special detail — Civil Defense Inspections	2,366
Complaints referred to Law Department for action	284

Financial Report, 1953 — Expenditures

1.	Personal Service:	
100.	Permanent employees	$423,855 17
110.	Temporary employees	—
120.	Overtime	1,670 12
		$425,525 29
2.	Contractual Services:	
230.	Professional and technical services	$168 00
240.	Recording and judicial services	19 00
270.	Repairs and servicing of equipment	255 43
282.	Travel expenses — inside the state	7,615 43
297.	Printing and binding	10,720 36
299.	Other contractual services	45,456 69
		$64,234 91
3.	Supplies and Materials:	
300.	Automotive supplies and materials	$243 51
346.	Household supplies	2 41
360.	Office supplies and materials	5,874 41
393.	General operating supplies and materials	67 25
395.	Tools and instruments	58 16
399.	Supplies not otherwise classified	59 36
		$6,305 10

4.	Current Charges and Obligations:	
	420. Dues and subscriptions	$64 00
	430. Bond and insurance premiums	35 00
	440. Licenses	3 00
		$102 00
5.	Equipment:	
	560. Office Equipment	$50 58
	593. Library — books	153 33
		$203 91
	Grand total	$496,371 21
Appropriation		$507,029 14
Department income		$94,077 25
Unsafe buildings razed by city	15	
Unsafe buildings shored by city or otherwise secured against trespass	32	
Total expenditures for shoring, securing, and razing		$45,456 69

Classification of Department Personnel

Quota	Title	Grade	Compensation
1	Building Commissioner	—	$916 67
1	Deputy Building Commissioner	32	131 56
1	Technical Assistant	28	113 00
1	Head Administrative Clerk	26	480 34
1	Zoning Administrator	26	110 46
3	Chief Building Inspector	24	$98 75–108 25
1	Chief Egress Inspector	24	108 25
1	Chief Elevator Inspector	24	108 25
1	Chief Gas Fitting Inspector	24	104 71
1	Chief Plumbing Inspector	24	90 50
1	Chief Sprinkler Inspector	24	103 58
4	Building Plan Examiner	24	90 50–108 25
1	Building Plan Examiner	24	450 23
3	Senior Egress Inspector	20	76 50 – 80 00
1	Legal Assistant	20	90 50
15	Building Inspector	19	73 00 – 87 00
8	Plumbing Inspector	18	73 00 – 83 50
7	Gas Fitting Inspector	18	70 50 – 83 50
3	Sprinkler Inspector	18	73 00 – 83 50
7	Elevator Inspector	18	68 00 – 83 50
15	Egress Inspector	17	65 50 70 00

2	Egress Inspector, Temporary	17		$65 50
2	Head Clerk	22	$87 00	– 93 20
1	Senior Cashier	19		87 00
3	Principal Clerk	17	65 50	– 80 00
1	Principal Clerk-Stenographer	17		68 27
3	Senior Clerk-Typist	13	65 50	– 68 00
1	Motor Equipment Operator	12		62 53
9	Clerk-Typist	8	48 00	– 58 70
1	Clerk Messenger	8		48 00
100				

GENERAL STATISTICS, 1953

On January 1, 1953, there were (estimated) in the City of Boston:

Brick and other fire-resistive buildings		46,155		
Erected during the year		199		
			46,354	
Taken down during year	101			
Existing January 1, 1954				46,253
Wood buildings		94,576		
Erected during year		429		
			95,005	
Taken down during year	162			
Existing January 1, 1954				94,843
Total number (estimated) of buildings in Boston on January 1, 1954				141,096

BOARD OF APPEAL

The Board of Appeal, established in accordance with section 117 of chapter 479, Acts of 1938, as amended, in its functioning, may vary the provisions of the Act referred to in specific cases which appear to them not to have been contemplated by this Act although covered by it, or in cases where manifest injustice is done, provided that the decision of the Board in such a case shall have the assent of four members under Building Law and shall be unanimous under Zoning Law and shall not conflict with the spirit of any provision of the Act.

The following is a statistical summary of the work of this department for the year 1953.

In *re* Building Law — chapter 479, Acts of 1938, as amended:

Appeals received		65
Appeals withdrawn	0	
Appeals pending	5	
Appeals sustained	14	
Appeals sustained with proviso	42	
Appeals dismissed	8	
Total		*69

In *re* Zoning Law — chapter 488, Acts of 1924, as amended:

Appeals received		156
Appeals withdrawn	11	
Appeals pending	11	
Appeals sustained	55	
Appeals sustained with proviso	55	
Appeals dismissed	42	
Total		†174

BOARD OF EXAMINERS

The Board of Examiners was created by city ordinance in 1913 and re-established under legislative act in 1938. It acts upon applications of persons desiring to be licensed in Boston as construction superintendents, approving or rejecting said applications under certain rules and regulations adopted as procedure by the Board. The members are appointed by the Mayor and consist of an architect or engineer, a contractor or mechanic, and a lawyer.

The following list is that of applications acted upon in 1953:

	Approved	Rejected
New licenses and reissues	463	137
Renewals	1,961	0
	2,424	137

Fees collected amounted to $6,237.

* Includes decisions on 4 cases pending from 1952.
† Includes decisions on 18 cases pending from 1952.